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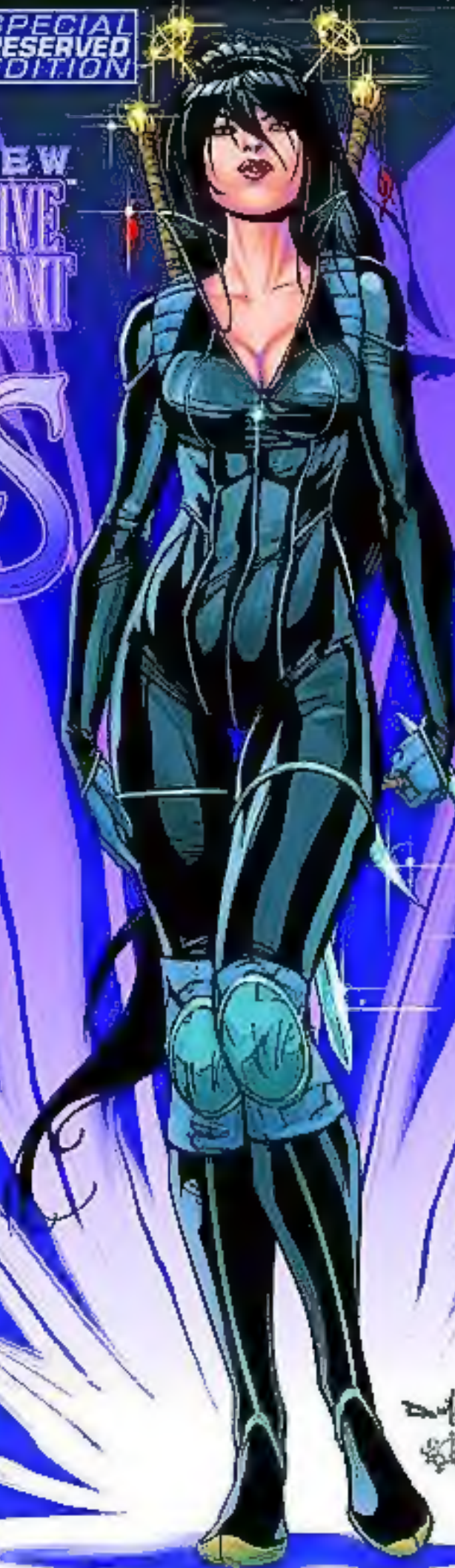
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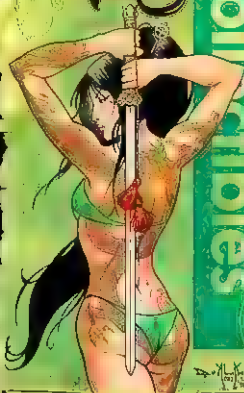
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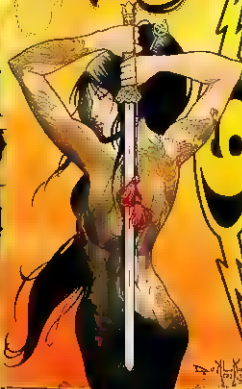
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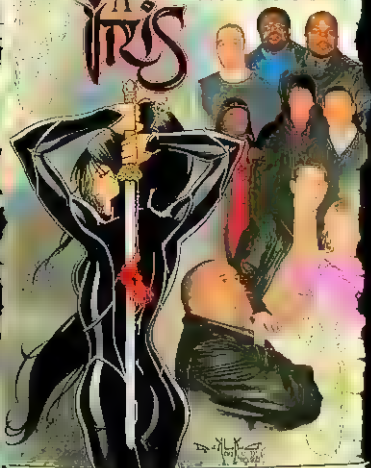


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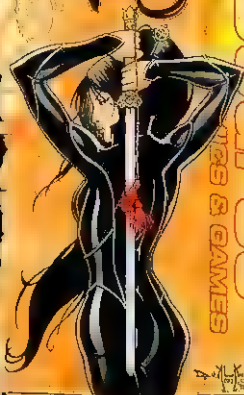
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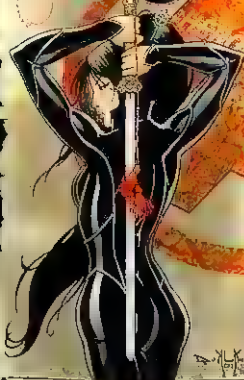
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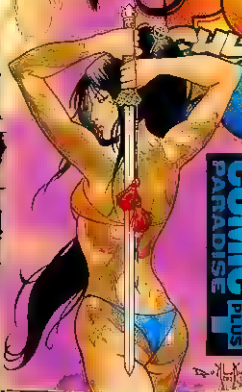
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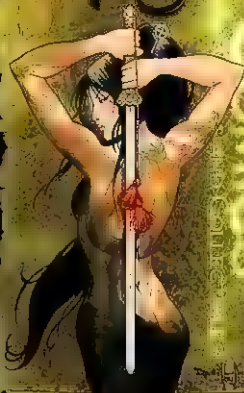


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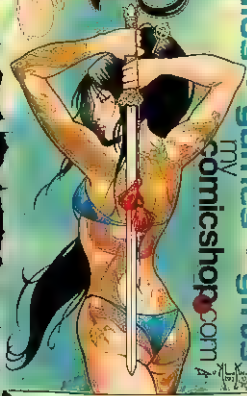


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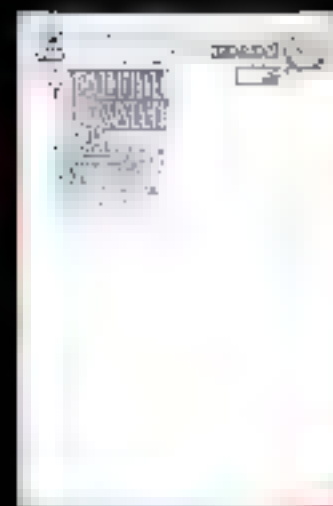




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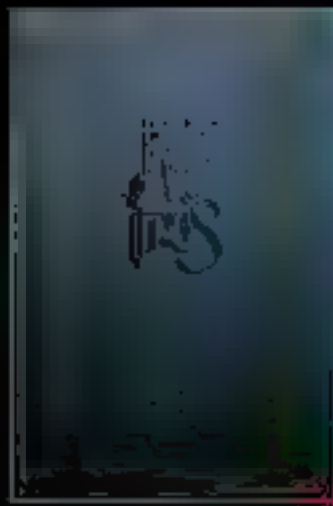
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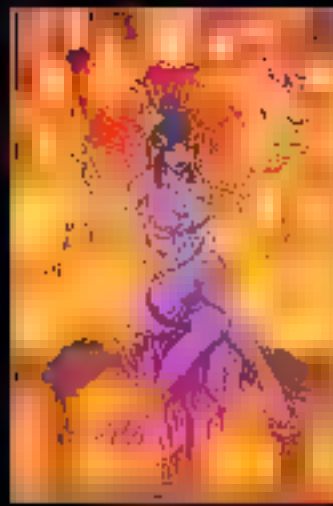
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PART 1 OF 5

BRIAN BUCCELLATO  
- story -

PASQUALE QUALANO  
- pencils -

CHAZ RIGGS  
- digital inks -

JOHN STARR  
- colors -

JOSH REED  
- lettering -

Executive Assistant: Iris created by David Wohl, Brad Foxhoven & Michael Turner

Editors: VINCE HERNANDEZ, FRANK MASTROMAURO Design and Production: MARK ROSLAN, PETER STEIGERWALD, JOSH REED

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ALL NEW EXECUTIVE ASSISTANT: IRIS™ Vol. 4 Issue 1

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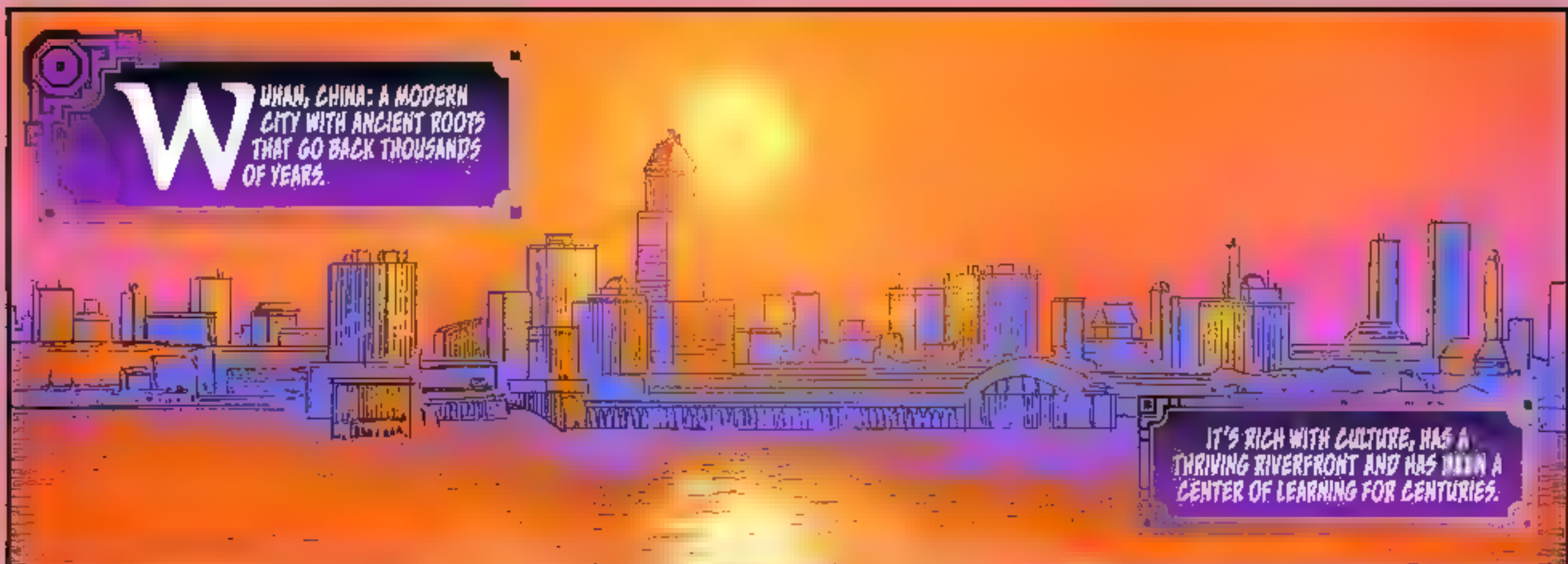
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The story so far:

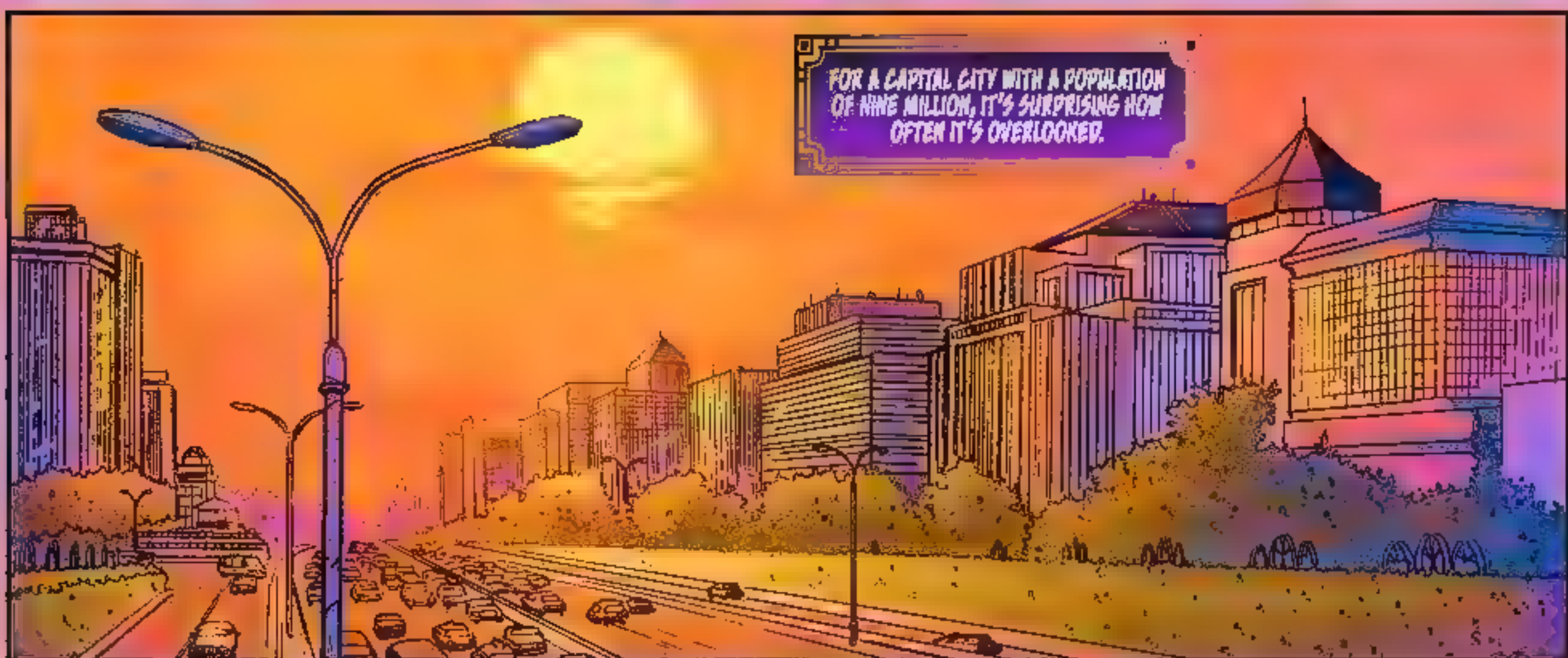
They are raised from their youth with strict obedience and brutally trained to protect and serve their respective masters with discipline, loyalty and often times violence, if necessary. They are the Executive Assistants.



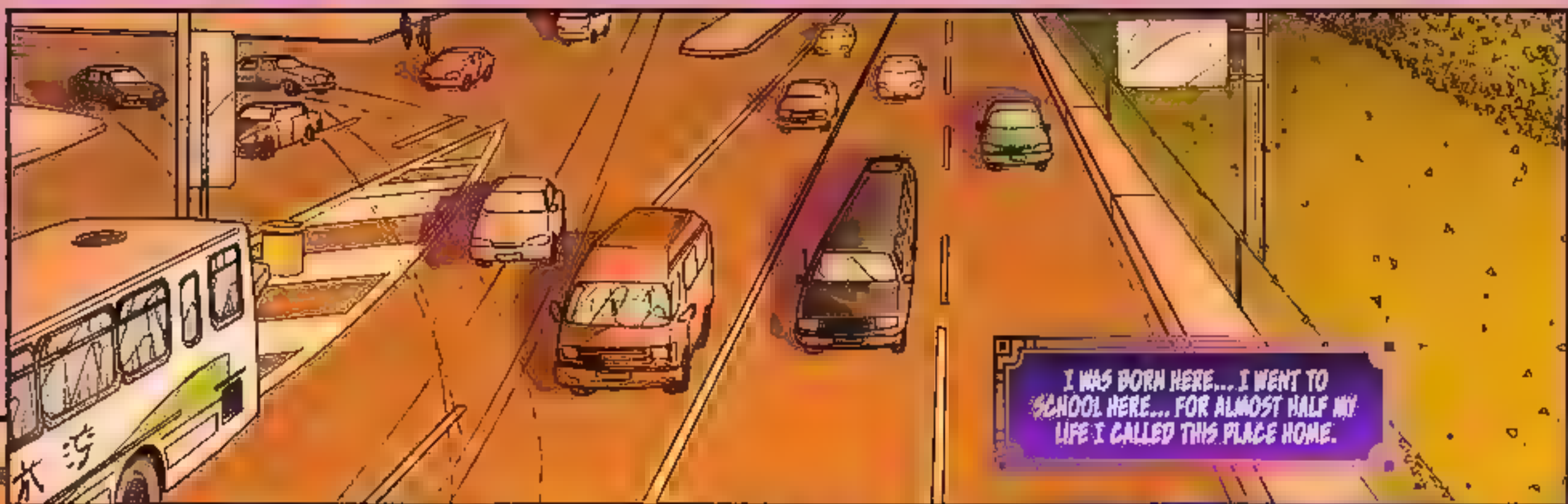


**W**UHAN, CHINA: A MODERN CITY WITH ANCIENT ROOTS THAT GO BACK THOUSANDS OF YEARS.

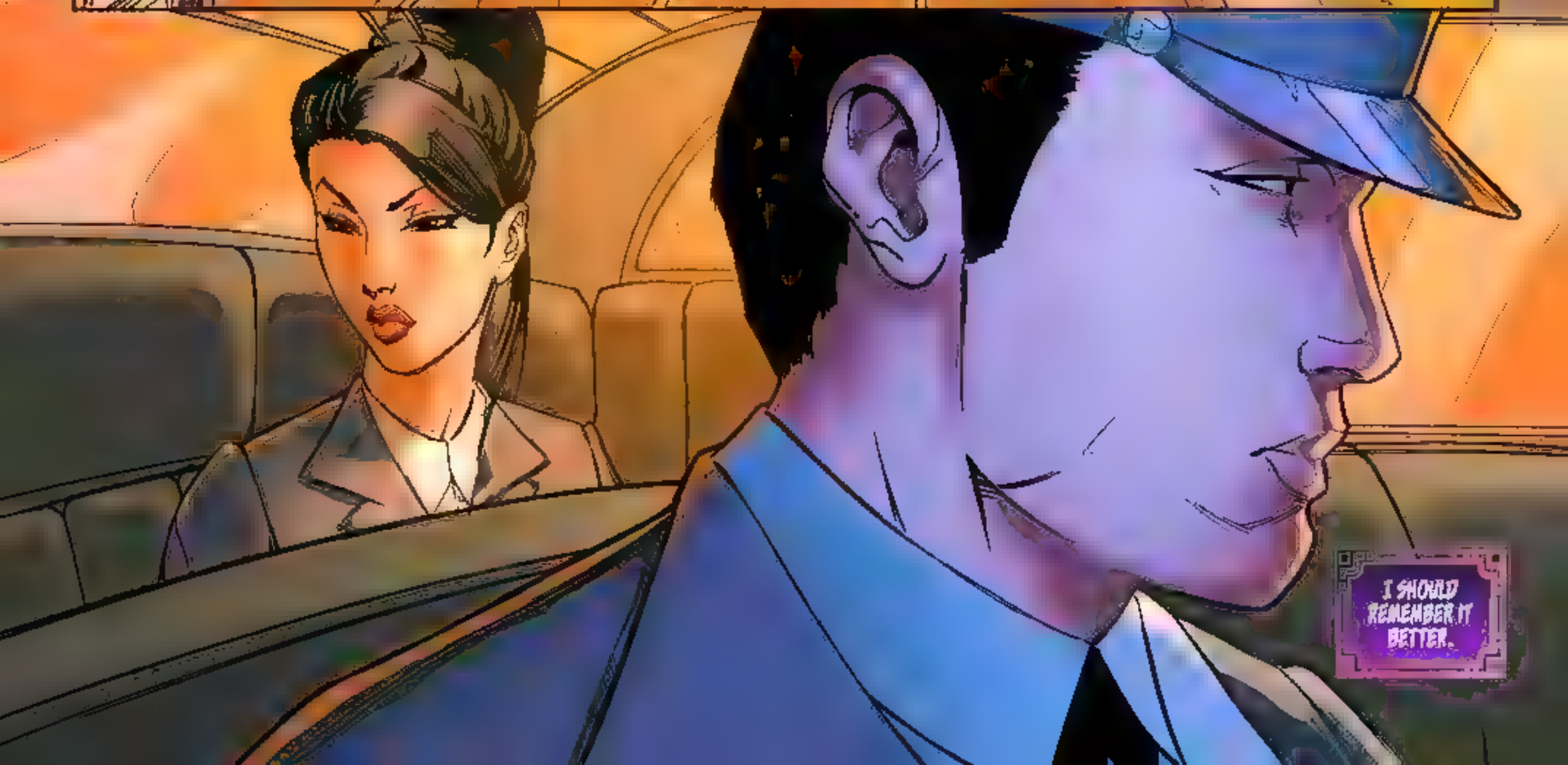
IT'S RICH WITH CULTURE, HAS A THRIVING RIVERFRONT AND HAS BEEN A CENTER OF LEARNING FOR CENTURIES.



FOR A CAPITAL CITY WITH A POPULATION OF NINE MILLION, IT'S SURPRISING HOW OFTEN IT'S OVERLOOKED.



I WAS BORN HERE... I WENT TO SCHOOL HERE... FOR ALMOST HALF MY LIFE I CALLED THIS PLACE HOME.

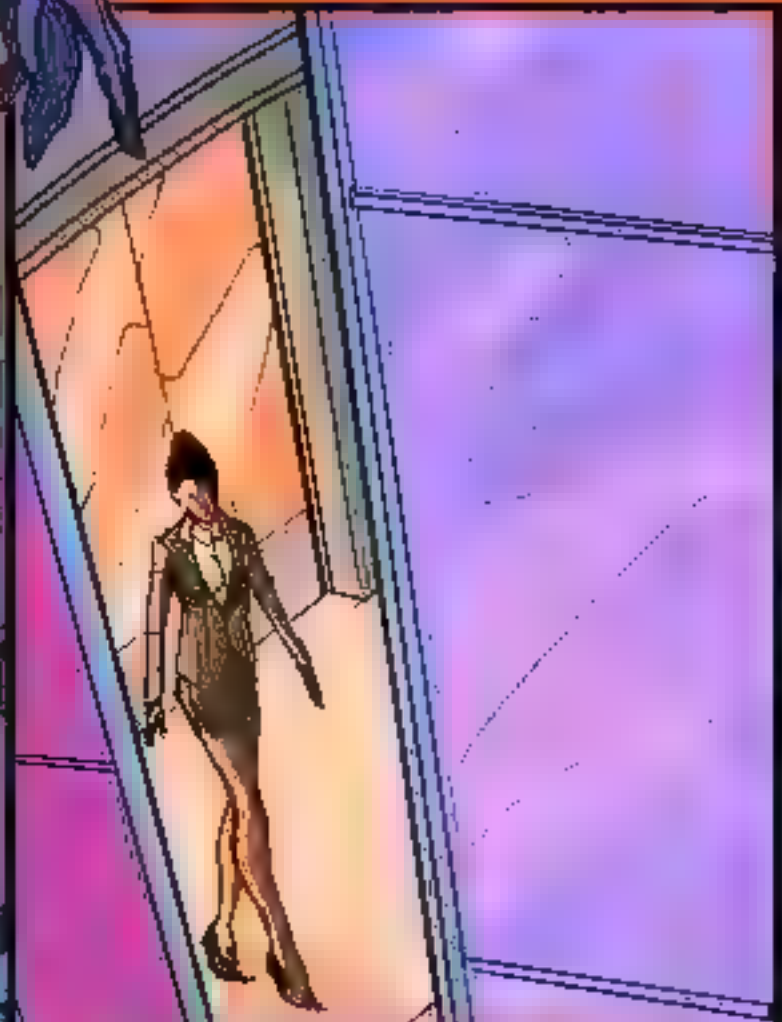


I SHOULD REMEMBER IT BETTER.



IT'S NOT SURPRISING  
THAT I'VE FORGOTTEN  
SO MUCH.

WHEN YOUR EARLIEST DAYS ARE SPENT IN  
DICKENSIAN ORPHANAGES OR AMONG THE VERMIN  
IN THE DARKEST CORNERS OF THE CITY, THERE'S  
NOTHING WORTH REMEMBERING.



WHEN THE STENCH OF  
MALNUTRITION AND SUFFERING  
PERMEATE EVERYTHING, YOU DON'T  
WONDER WHY THIS IS HAPPENING...  
YOU WONDER WHY YOU'RE  
STILL ALIVE.



WHEN ORPHANS DIE OF STARVATION, SICKNESS, OR THROUGH VIOLENCE, THE PAINS YOU FEEL AREN'T EMPATHY... THEY'RE JEALOUSY.

...BECAUSE THEY ARE FREE AND YOU ARE FORCED TO LIVE ANOTHER DAY.

AND THE DAY A STRANGE MAN TAKES YOU BY THE HAND AND OFFERS YOU FOOD, SHELTER AND AN EDUCATION... YOU DON'T JUMP AT THE CHANCE TO MAKE SOMETHING OF YOURSELF...

YOU SECRETLY HOPE HE HAS WICKED INTENTIONS AND YOU JUMP AT THE CHANCE TO DIE.

THAT'S WHO I WAS WHEN I JOINED THE ACADEMY. WITHOUT HOPE OR FEAR. I WAS NOTHING.

IT'S WHERE I NEEDED TO START...TO BE BUILT UP... TO PROPERLY LEARN THIS TRADE.

IT'S WHY I LEARNED THE VALUE OF HONOR AND LOYALTY. IT'S WHAT MADE ME AN EXECUTIVE ASSISTANT.



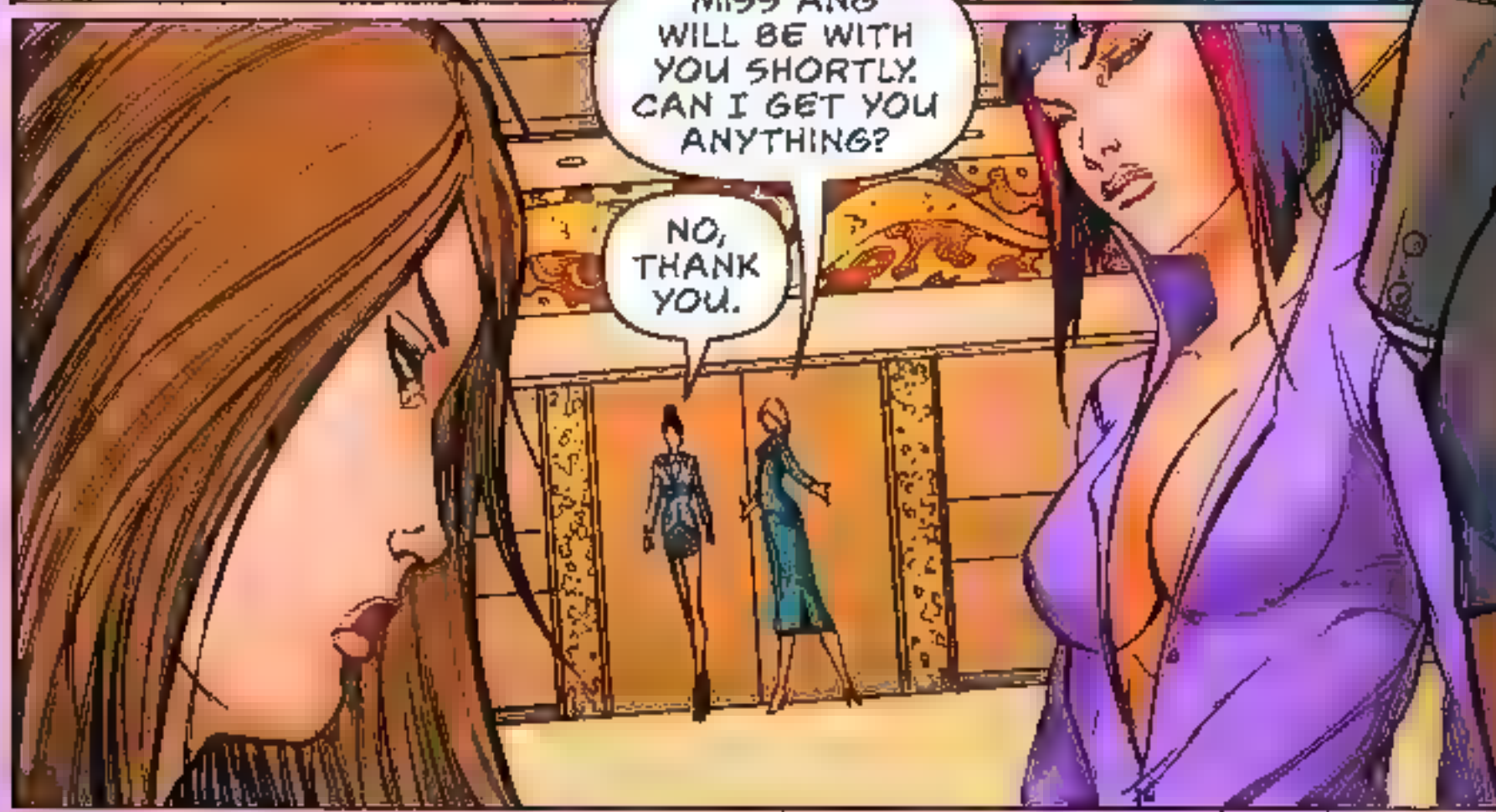


RIGHT THIS WAY, MISS IRIS... WITH THE OTHER APPLICANTS.

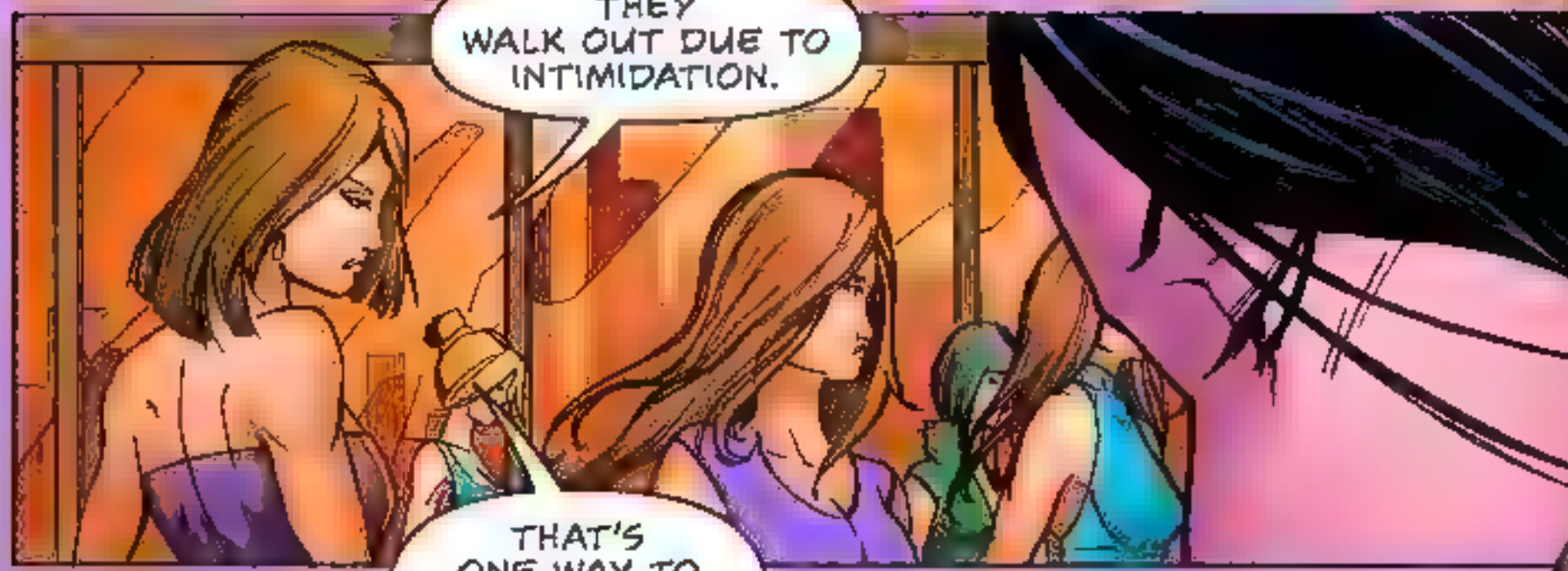


MISS ANG WILL BE WITH YOU SHORTLY. CAN I GET YOU ANYTHING?

NO, THANK YOU.



THEY WALK OUT DUE TO INTIMIDATION.



THAT'S ONE WAY TO NARROW DOWN THE FIELD... IRIS.











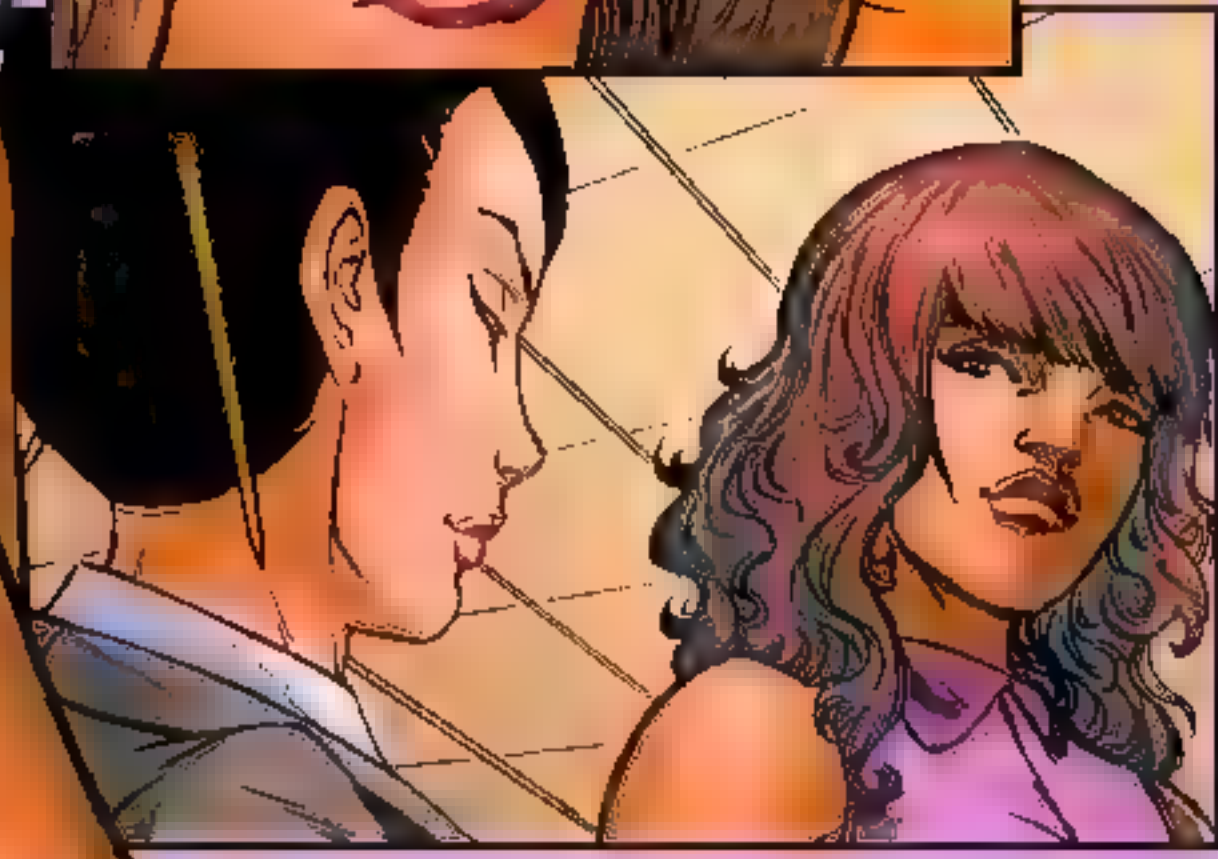
IT SEEMS YOU TWO ARE THE LAST ONES STANDING. THANK YOU BOTH FOR APPLYING FOR THE POSITION OF **EXECUTIVE ASSISTANT**.

I'M NOT SURE WHAT YOU KNOW ABOUT ME, BUT I'M--

<YOU'RE MALY ANG... OWNER OF ANG COMPOUNDS AND ANG COSMETICS AND A MAJOR SHAREHOLDER IN SHAO LABORATORIES. ALTHOUGH YOU ARE OF CAMBODIAN ORIGIN, YOU'RE A PROTÉGÉ OF THE LEGENDARY CHINESE BILLIONAIRE HAN LI SHAO... AND YOUR WUHAN-BASED COMPANIES ARE THE LARGEST PROVIDERS OF AGRICULTURAL CHEMICALS, WORLDWIDE.>\*



\*TRANSLATED FROM KHMER.



WELL DONE. YOUR ABILITY TO GOOGLE SEARCH IS IMPRESSIVE. YOUR GRASP ON BASIC MANNERS IN THE WAY YOU INTERRUPTED MS. ANG... MUCH LESS IMPRESSIVE.



<AND I ALSO SPEAK CAMBODIAN.>

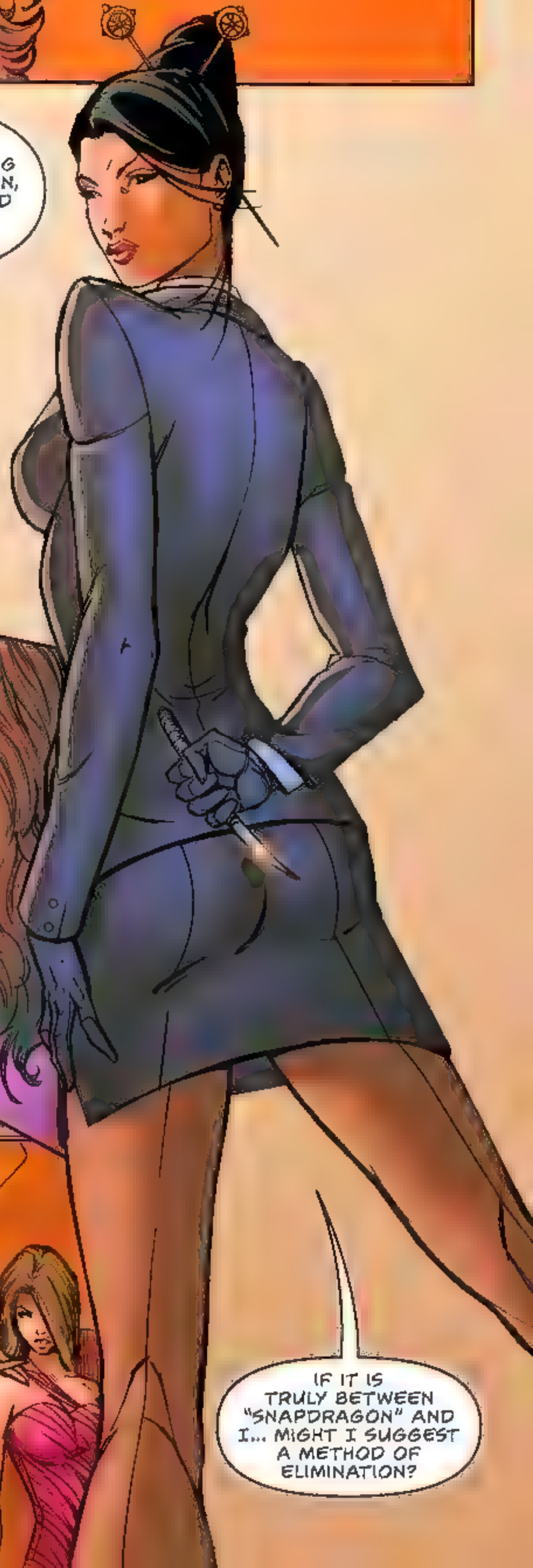




AS LONG  
AS WE ARE LISTING  
CREDENTIALS... FULL  
DISCLOSURE:



SNAPDRAGON,  
TOP OF YOUR CLASS OUT  
OF THE NOW DEFUNCT XIANJIANG  
ACADEMY. AN EXPERT MARKSMAN,  
KNOWN FOR YOUR TENACITY AND  
SPOTLESS RECORD... HAVING  
NEVER FAILED AN  
EMPLOYER.



EXECUTIVE  
ASSISTANT IRIS... ALREADY  
A LEGEND AT 28 YEARS OF  
AGE. RECOGNIZED THE WORLD  
OVER FOR YOUR BEAUTY, YOUR  
STEADINESS UNDER THE MOST  
DIRE SITUATIONS AND FOR  
YOUR UNPARALLELED  
FIGHTING SKILLS...

DON'T  
FORGET HER  
PERFECT RECORD.  
TWO EMPLOYERS...  
TWO DEATHS.

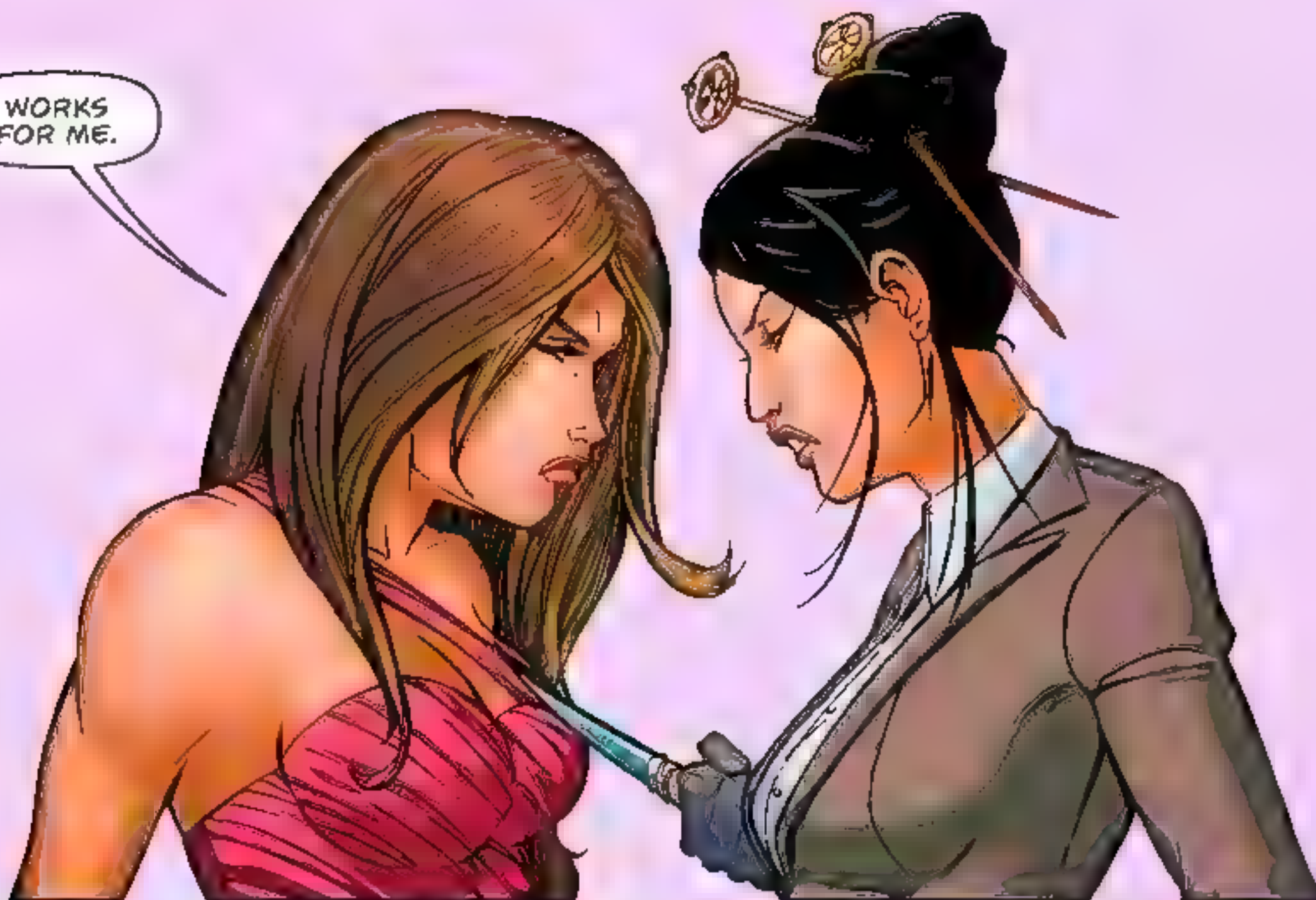
IT APPEARS  
THIS COMPETITION  
IS STARTING TO  
HEAT UP.



IF IT IS  
TRULY BETWEEN  
"SNAPDRAGON" AND  
I... MIGHT I SUGGEST  
A METHOD OF  
ELIMINATION?



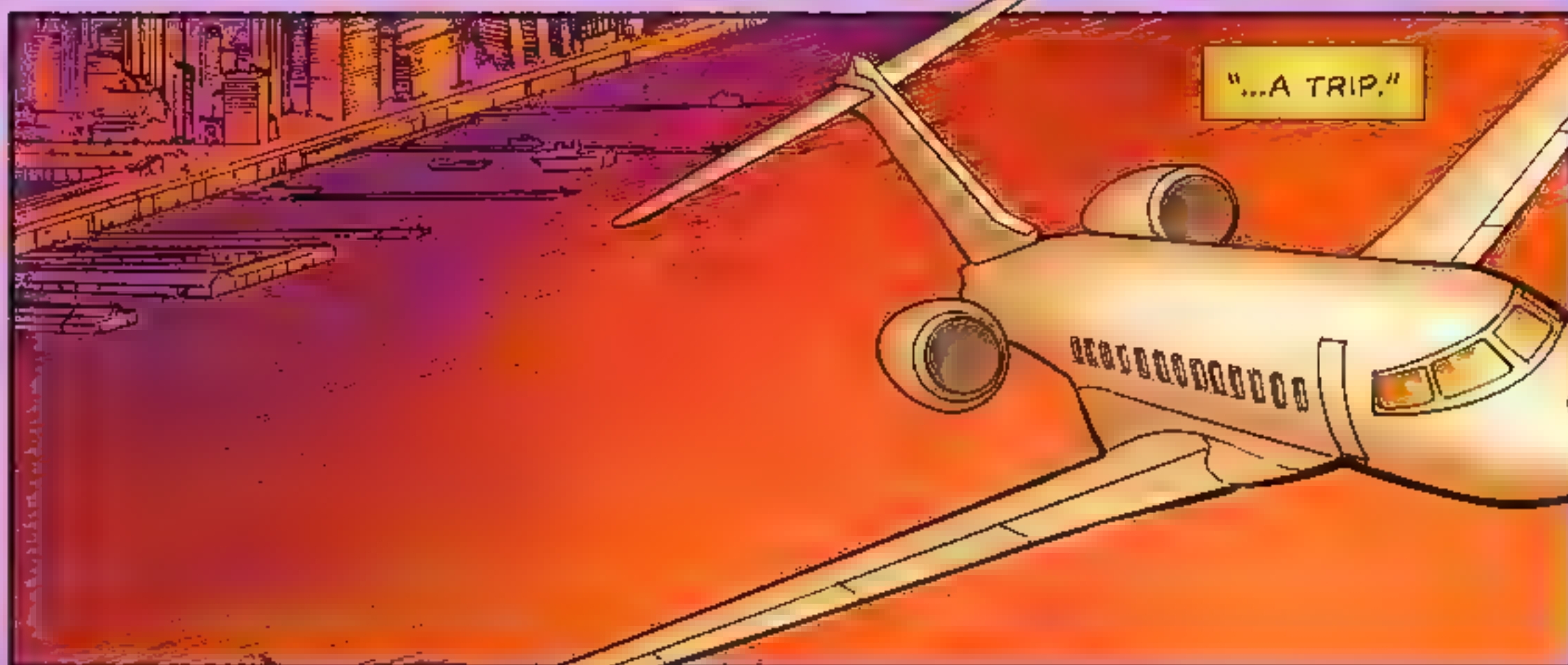
WORKS  
FOR ME.



ACTUALLY,  
I HAVE SOMETHING  
ELSE IN MIND...



"...A TRIP."





SHINJUKU DISTRICT, TOKYO

PURPLE BLOSSOM  
NIGHTCLUB, AFTER HOURS

I WOULD HAVE PREFERRED  
TAKING DRAGON DOWN A PEG,  
BUT I AM INTRIGUED WITH  
MAY'S HIRING METHODS.

I DO ADMIRE HER  
DESIRE TO WITNESS OUR  
WORK FIRST HAND...

...STILL, JETSETTING TO AN  
IMPROMPTU MEETING HAS MADE  
MY CUSTOMARY PREPARATION  
IMPOSSIBLE.

THANK YOU  
FOR TRAVELING OUT  
HERE ON SUCH SHORT  
NOTICE, MISS ANG.

WHILE MY  
BROTHER AND I  
APPRECIATE THE EYE  
CANDY YOU'VE BROUGHT,  
WE CAN'T HELP BUT  
NOTICE THAT MISTER  
SHAO IS NOT WITH  
YOU.

AND JUDGING BY THIS  
COLLECTION OF UNSAVORY  
LOOKING MEN, I HAVE THE  
FEELING THAT SHE WILL GET  
TO WITNESS OUR FULL  
REPERTOIRE.

I UNDERSTAND  
YOUR CONCERN,  
AKINORI... BUT REST  
ASSURED THAT I AM  
QUALIFIED TO SPEAK  
ON BEHALF OF OUR  
INTERESTS.

ARE YOU?  
PERHAPS  
MISTER SHAO  
DOESN'T THINK  
WE ARE MEN  
TO BE TAKEN  
SERIOUSLY.

THESE BROTHERS LOOK  
FAMILAR... BUT ARE TOO  
YOUNG AND RECKLESS TO BE  
OF CONSEQUENCE. HOLDING A  
HIGH PROFILE MEETING AT A  
NIGHTCLUB? IT'S AN INSULT.

I TOOK  
THIS MEETING OUT OF  
RESPECT TO YOUR LATE  
FATHER. ALL YOU NEED TO  
CONCERN YOURSELF WITH  
IS WHETHER OR NOT I  
TAKE YOU SERIOUSLY.



WORSE, THE OTHERS ARE CONCEALING WEAPONS...  
WHICH MEANS THEY ARE EITHER DISREPUTABLE BUSINESS MEN...

OR HIRED GUNMEN.

YOU  
DARE INSULT  
US?!

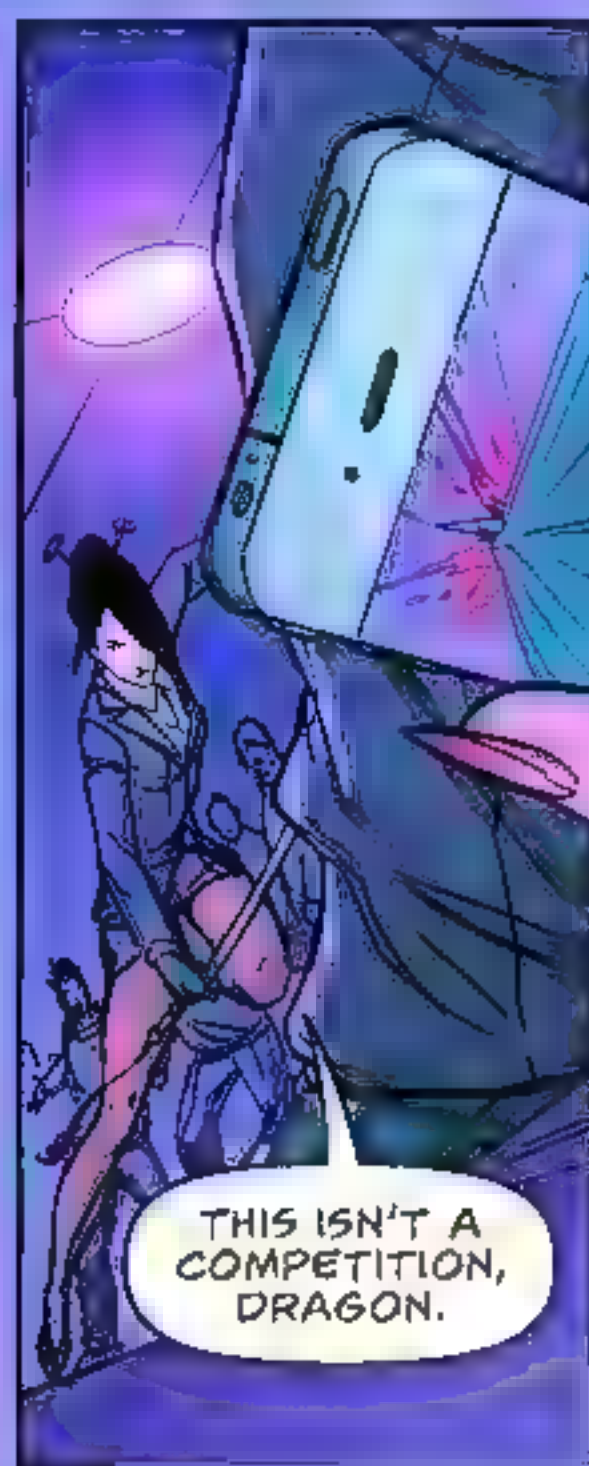
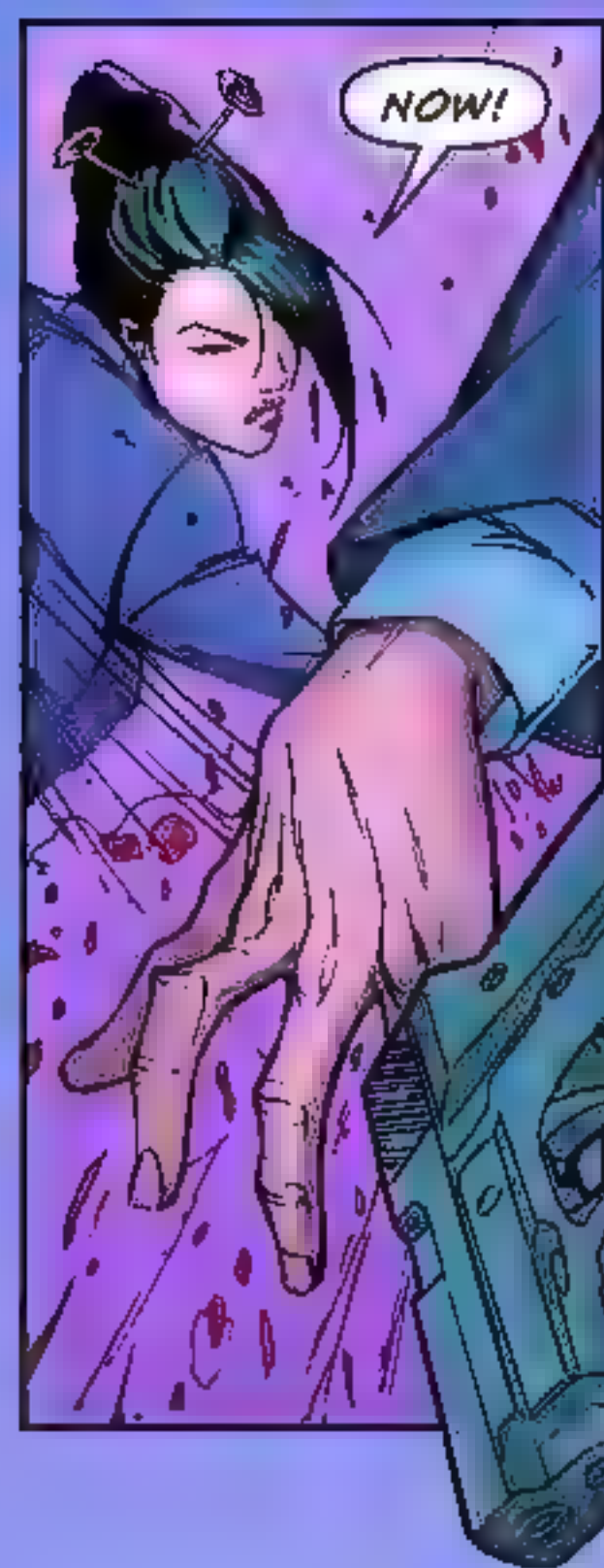
MAYBE  
YOU NEED TO  
BE TAUGHT A  
LESSON!

ENOUGH!

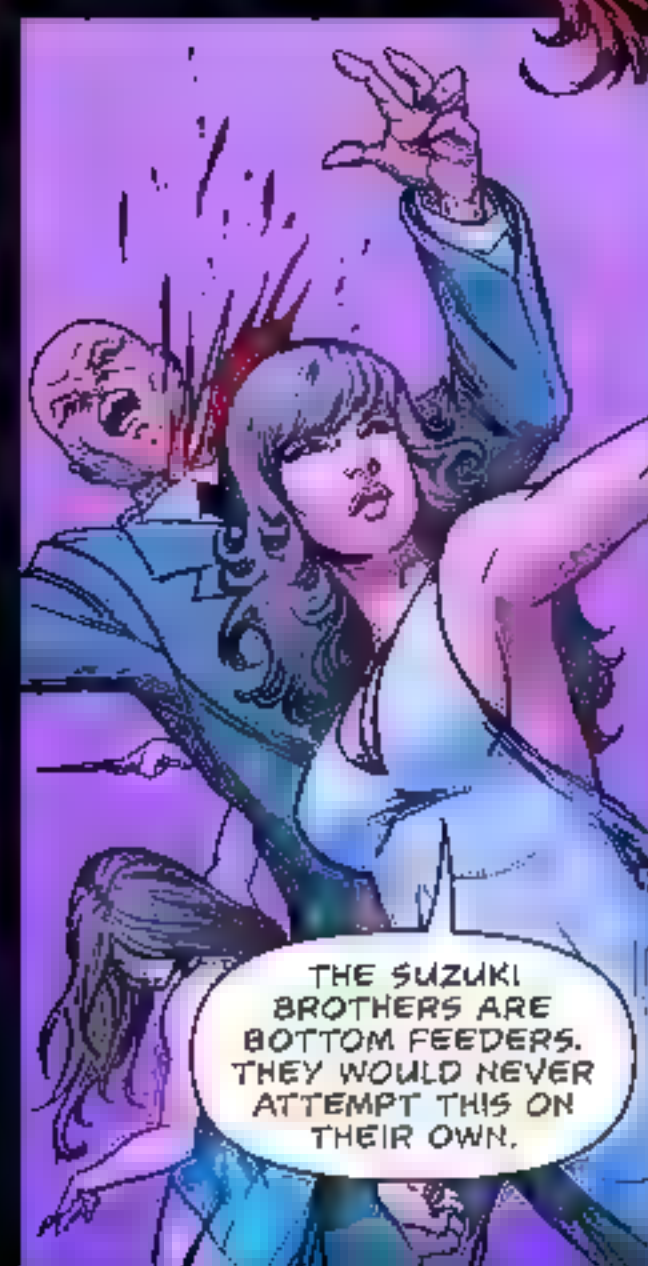
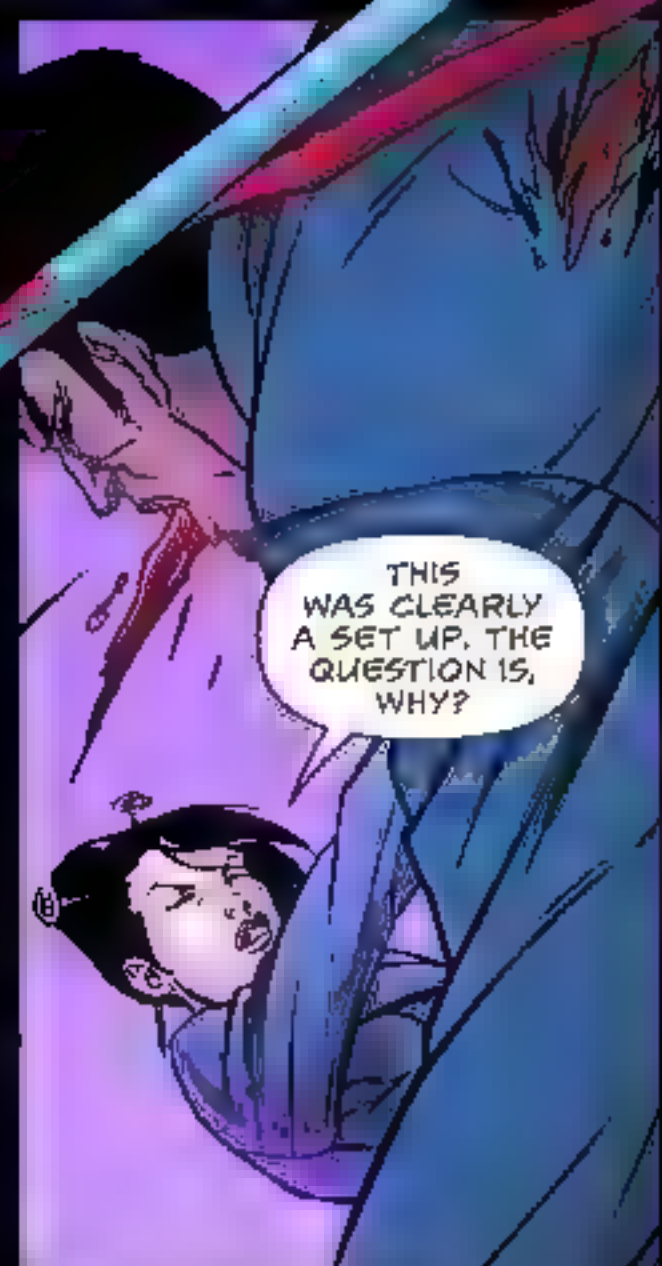
I'M DONE  
INDULGING YOU. SIT  
DOWN AND ACT LIKE  
CIVILIZED BUSINESSMEN  
OR THIS MEETING  
IS OVER.



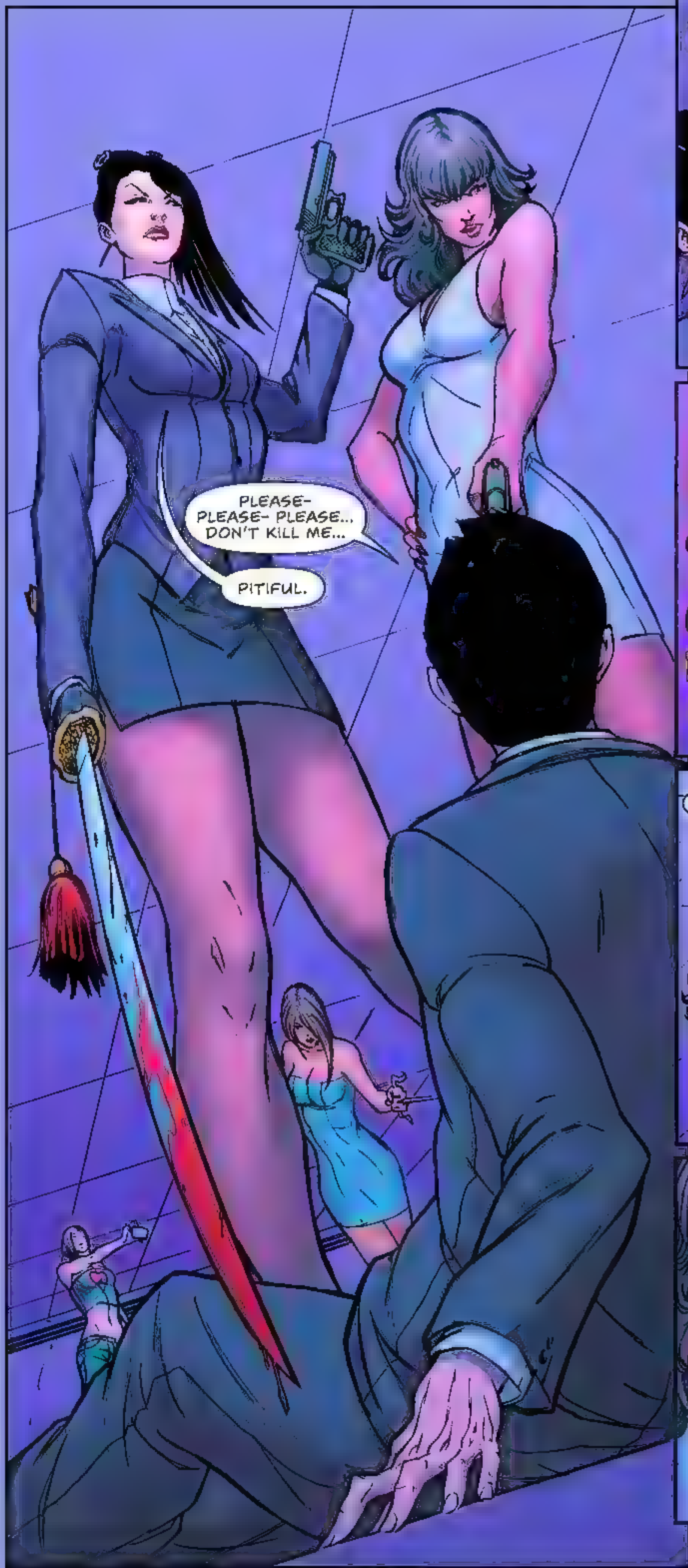










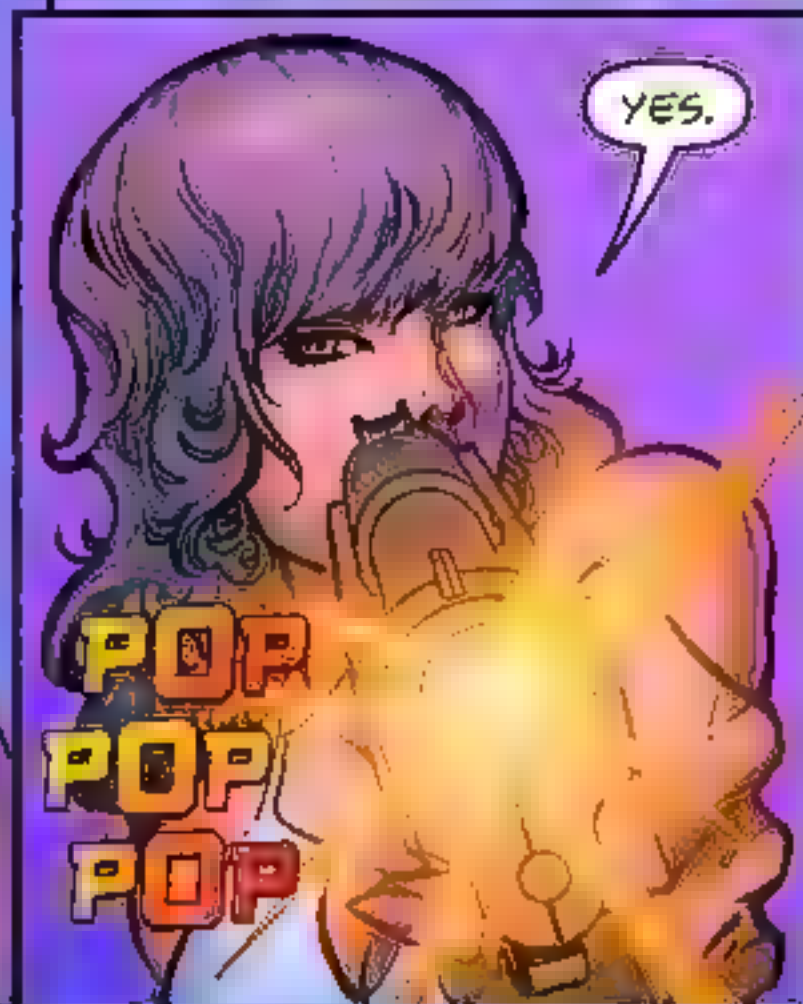


PLEASE-  
PLEASE- PLEASE...  
DON'T KILL ME...

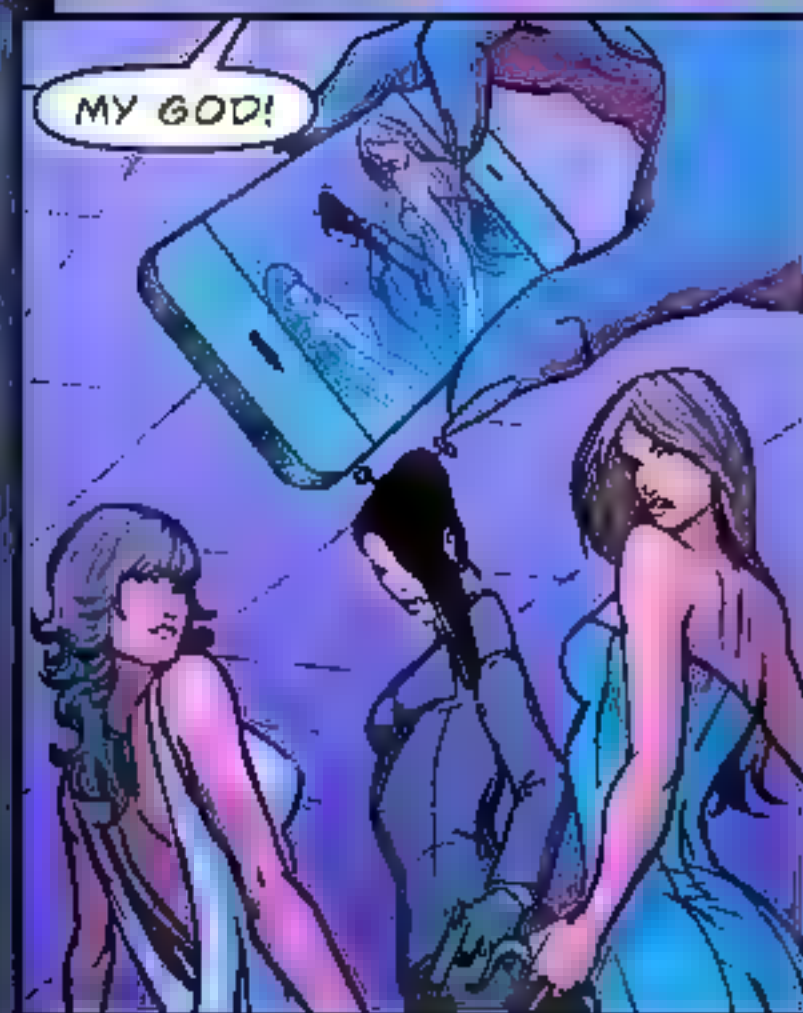
PITIFUL.



ARE YOU  
ALRIGHT, MISS  
ANG?



YES.



MY GOD!



LEAVE  
NO EVIDENCE  
BEHIND.









YOU DARE SHOW ME UP?!

I WILL DO MUCH MORE THAN THAT, SNAPDRAGON!

KILLING YOU WILL BE ICING ON THE CAKE!

KEEP TALKING, ORPHAN...

wooooooohh

CLUMSY.

ENOUGH!

IS THIS HOW YOU DO BUSINESS? WALTZING INTO AMBUSHES... AND KILLING CIVILIANS?!

I'M NOT A MINDLESS ASSASSIN... I'M AN EXECUTIVE ASSISTANT.

CONGRATULATIONS, DRAGON...



THE WUHAN ACADEMY.

I OWE MY LIFE TO THE ACADEMY. NOT THIS ONE... BUT ONE LIKE IT.

THEY TOOK ME FROM LESS THAN NOTHING AND BUILT ME UP. THEY TAUGHT ME INNUMERABLE SKILLS AND INSTILLED VALUES, HONOR AND RESPECT. THEY TRAINED ME HOW TO LIVE AS AN EXECUTIVE ASSISTANT.

MY FIRST EMPLOYER, MISTER CHING, WAS A MAN OF MEANS WHO PAID HANDSOMELY FOR THE HONOR OF MY SERVICES. HE NEVER TOOK THIS LIGHTLY AND HE NEVER TOOK ME FOR GRANTED.

WITH MISTER CHING, I EXPERIENCED A QUALITY OF LIFE THAT FEW EVER GLIMPSE. I WAS LAVISHED IN LUXURY AND I TRAVELED THE WORLD. IN MY YEARS OF SERVICE, WE FORMED A BOND BUILT UPON THE ONE THING THAT DOESN'T COME EASY TO AN ORPHAN FROM THE STREETS. TRUST.

AND THEN HE KILLED THE MAN I LOVED AND MY WORLD FELL APART.


SINCE THEN I'VE SOUGHT AN EMPLOYER THAT I CAN DEVOTE MY LIFE TO. INSTEAD I HAVE FOUND ONLY DISHONESTY AND BETRAYAL. THIS IS NOT HOW THINGS ARE SUPPOSED TO BE.

I LEARNED SO MUCH... EXCEPT HOW TO LIVE ON MY OWN.

I KNOW YOU'RE HERE, MALY...

...I HEARD YOUR APPROACH.







I OWE YOU  
AN APOLOGY,  
IRIS.

FOR NOT  
WARNING ME THAT  
YOU WERE LEADING US  
INTO AN AMBUSH, OR FOR  
ASKING ME TO KILL  
AN INNOCENT?

BOTH. I KNEW  
IT WAS A SET UP WHEN MISTER  
SHAO CANCELLED AT THE LAST MINUTE.  
BUT HONOR DICTATED THAT I  
KEEP MY COMMITMENT.

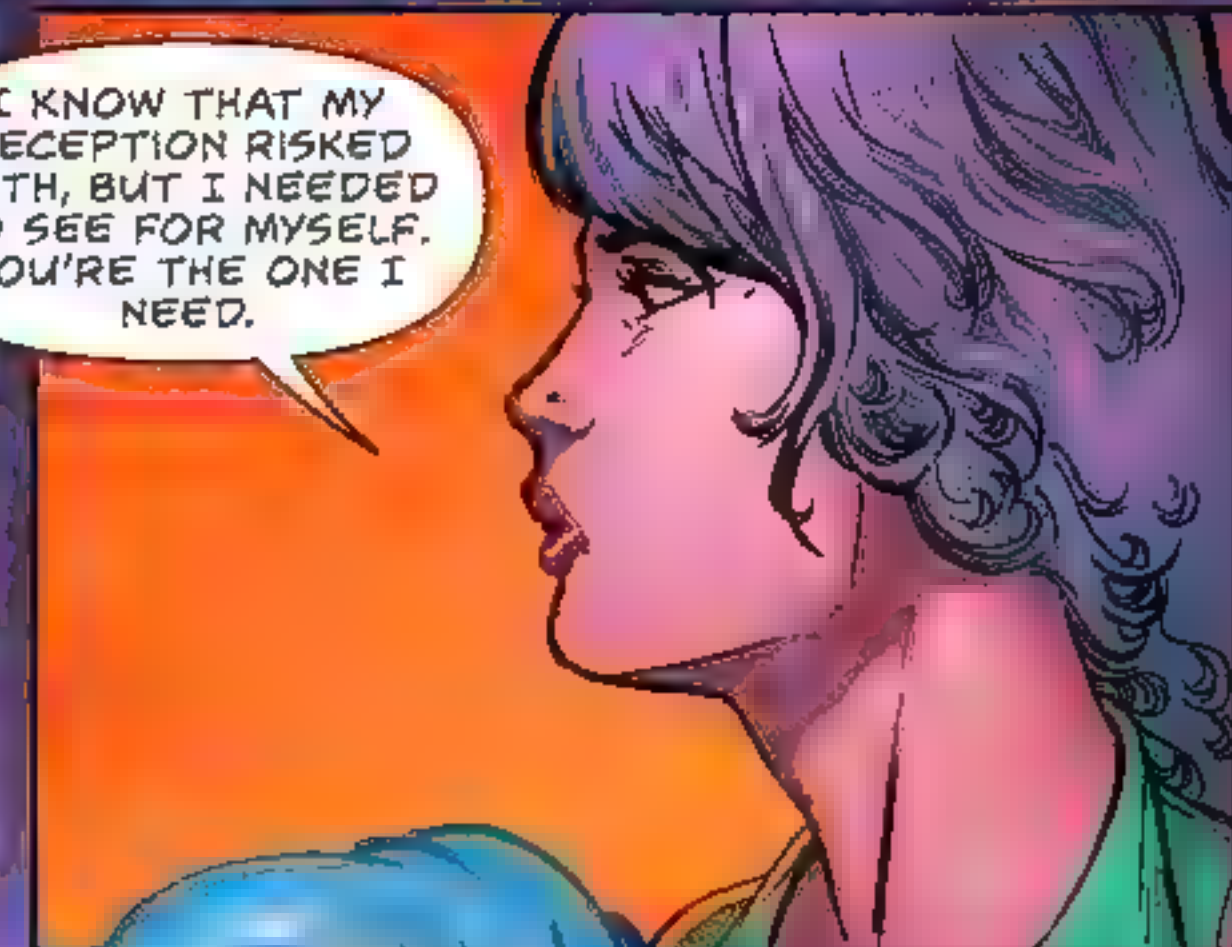


I SHOULD'VE TOLD  
YOU THE PARAMETERS  
BEFOREHAND. BUT I  
WANTED TO TEST YOU...  
TO SEE HOW YOU'D  
REACT--




--TO SEE  
WHO WE'D KILL  
FOR YOU?


I DON'T WANT  
A MERCENARY LIKE DRAGON.  
I NEED SOMEONE THAT VALUES  
HONOR OVER OBEDIENCE... SOMEONE  
WHO UNDERSTANDS THAT THIS IS A  
PARTNERSHIP... BUILT ON TRUST  
AND RESPECT.



I KNOW THAT MY  
DECEPTION RISKED  
BOTH, BUT I NEEDED  
TO SEE FOR MYSELF.  
YOU'RE THE ONE I  
NEED.



EVEN IF I  
**COULD** TRUST YOU,  
WHY WOULD I WANT  
TO INVOLVE MYSELF  
WITH YOUR MESSY  
AFFAIRS?



WE BOTH  
KNOW IT WAS  
YOUR MENTOR SHAO  
WHO SET YOU UP.  
THE QUESTION  
IS WHY?





MALY  
ANG!!! YOU  
TRAITOR!

HAN LI  
SHAO?

TO BE  
CONTINUED...  
ALL NEW EXECUTIVE  
ASSISTANT: IRIS #2



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ALL NEW  
**EXECUTIVE ASSISTANT**  
**IRIS**

**#2**

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THE NEXT  
THRILLING  
ISSUE!**

**WRITTEN BY:**  
**BRIAN BUCCELLATO**

(THE FLASH, BLACK BAT, FOSTER)

**PENCILS BY:**  
**PASQUALE QUALANO**

(IDOLIZED, SOULFIRE: GRACE)

**COLORS BY:**  
**JOHN STARR**

(LEGEND OF THE SHADOW CLAN, FATHOM, SOULFIRE)

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FRANCIS MANAPUL**



# NEW HONOR

By Brian Buccellato  
Art by Pasquale Qualano

Technically, I'm a new addition to the Aspen creative family. That feels like such a strange thing to say, considering how long I've known these guys. Frank, Peter and I go all the way back to the mid-nineties. I've played mediocre softball and done some seriously inconsistent bowling with them... Vince, Mark, Frank and I have been gymrats and competed on lousy basketball teams together for almost a decade. Poker, parties, holidays, conventions... they've been a major part of my life for so long that it doesn't seem like this is our first dance. But it is, and I'm thrilled and grateful that we finally get to collaborate.

I'm probably even more thrilled that this collaboration is on Executive Assistant: Iris. Why? Because I'm taking the baton from series creator, David Wohl, who I happen to have known for over 25 years. Yeah, I've got history with these fools.

Nostalgia aside, when I was offered the chance to write volume 4, I jumped at the opportunity. Sure, my friendship with the fine folks at Aspen was an added bonus, but the real star of this show was Iris. Let's be real. Her job is awesome, she's a total badass, and she's gone through major adversity in the three previous volumes. In a relatively short time, David and Vince Hernandez (Executive Assistant: Assassins) have managed to put her through the ringer AND craft a fully fleshed out world. So for me, it wasn't about reinventing the world or re-imagining her; it was about using her past to propel her into the future.

That's where this series picks up. Iris has had multiple employers, and asskicked her way to the top of the food chain. She's a living legend and really has no peer. Her life should be on a super high note, but it's not. She's been betrayed too many times and it's taken its toll because lesser men and women have trampled the code of honor she adheres to. She's an executive assistant without an employer worth serving.

Iris is a ronin in search of a cause worth fighting for.

In "Honor Bound", Iris' search for an honorable employer will take her on an unexpected journey that will finally give her life meaning. But it will come in the form of something she least expected.

Needless to say, I'm really proud of this story. Thanks for reading... I hope you stick around for the rest of this ride. It's a doozy.

—B



Join  
Brian Buccellato,  
Pasquale Qualano  
and John Starr  
each month for  
this exhilarating  
thrill ride as they  
bring you...

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**EXECUTIVE  
ASSISTANT**  
**IRIS**





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